

Recipients – 2014 Access Equity and Human Rights Awards

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To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	Citywide
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report advises Council of the result of the nomination process for the City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards. These Awards are the Aboriginal Affairs Award, the Access Award on Disability Issues, the Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women, the Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Two Spirited Issues and the William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award.

The recipient of the Constance E. Hamilton Award is selected by the Women Members of Council and will be a supplementary item to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council extend congratulations to the following who have been selected by a community panel as recipients of the 2014 City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards:
 - Aboriginal Affairs Award: David Abbott
 - Access Award: Luke Anderson
 - Pride Award: Keisha Williams
 - William P. Hubbard Award: Ritu Bhasin

Financial Impact

The adoption of this report's recommendation will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in divisions' budgets.

Equity Impact Statement

This program highlights the City's commitment to equity issues and provides an important opportunity to celebrate human rights achievements.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto City Council established five awards to recognize individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions on access, equity and human rights issues. Nomination forms are available in December of each year. Recipients are considered from nominations submitted by the public and selected by a panel comprised of community individuals with expertise and knowledge of the issues relevant to the areas covered by the awards. Recipients of the Constance E. Hamilton Award are selected by the Women Members of Council.

The recipients of the Awards are recognized at a ceremony in November 2014 commemorating the United Nations Human Rights Day that is celebrated on December 10th.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

1. The City of Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Award

Established in 2003, the Aboriginal Affairs Award is presented annually to a person or persons or organization whose volunteer efforts have made a significant contribution towards improving the quality of life for the Aboriginal community in Toronto. Examples of contributions include services or advocacy work on issues such as health, shelter or street work, governance and self-determination, employment, economic development, human rights or cultural activities.

2. The City of Toronto Access Award for Disability Issues

The Access Award for Disability Issues was established during 1981 as part of the celebrations for the International Year for the Disabled. The Access Award is presented annually to a person or persons who have made a significant contribution towards improving the lives of people with disabilities by integrating them into all aspects of society.

Access can include the design of a new or renovated structure, program or service that contributes significantly towards the independent living of people with disabilities. Public acknowledgement of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others to help create an environment of inclusion.

3. Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Two Spirited Issues

The Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Two Spirited Issues was established in 2003 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Toronto City Council's decision to adopt a human rights policy to provide protection on the basis of sexual orientation. The Award honours individuals and/or organizations who have made or are making a significant or ongoing contribution to the well-being and advancement of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and two spirited community in Toronto.

4. William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations

The William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award was established in 1987 and is named after the first person of African heritage to serve as a Toronto City Councillor. William P. Hubbard entered politics in 1894 and served for a total of 15 years. He was Acting Mayor in 1906 and 1907. He was an advocate of public ownership of the hydroelectric system and during his political career worked towards the founding of Ontario Hydro.

The William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award celebrates the achievements of Toronto residents who work, often without recognition, to foster a positive race relations environment. Their dedication and commitment has improved the quality of life for all in the City. The public acknowledgement of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others to become actively involved in the elimination of racism and prejudice.

5. The Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women

The Constance E. Hamilton Award was established in 1979 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Person's Case, which recognized that women were "persons" and could be appointed to the Senate of Canada. The Award was named after Constance E. Hamilton who in 1920 was the first woman elected to a municipal council in Toronto.

The Award recognizes person(s) who have made a significant contribution to improving the social, economic, cultural and political status of women in Toronto and whose efforts have received limited public attention. Recognition of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others in their efforts to achieve equality and to remove barriers.

COMMENTS

The nominating panel has selected recipients of the Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards from nominations submitted by the public. The members of the nominating panel were: Michelle Amerie, Canadian Abilities; Todd Ross, Casey House Toronto; Jackie Esquimaux-Hamlin, First Nations House, University of Toronto; Sharon Simpson, Urban Alliance; Larry Frost, Native Canadian Centre; Mel White, OPS, Diversity Inclusion Office; April McConnell, Pegasus Toronto and Donna Turner, Rainbow Health Network. Staff support is provided by Equity, Diversity and Human Rights, City Manager's Office.

Aboriginal Affairs Award:

David Abbott

David Abbott has made an outstanding contribution to the Aboriginal community in Toronto through his unwavering commitment to the Aboriginal Economic Business Development Project (AEBDP). David has played a pivotal role laying the groundwork, bringing together stakeholders and facilitating dialogue in the public and private sectors for an initiative that will lay the foundation for a sustainable Aboriginal business community in downtown Toronto. The project sponsored by the Metcalf Foundation promotes new strategies to address access to business opportunities, quality jobs and economic livelihood for Aboriginal people in the GTA. David is of Ojibway and English origin from Toronto, Ontario with family ties to the Pays Plat First Nation in Northern Ontario.

Access Award:

Luke Anderson

Luke Anderson is an engineer, accessibility consultant, community builder, innovator and advocate for the creation of a more inclusive society. Over the past decade, Luke has been leading through action across the country and especially in the City of Toronto through his professional and personal life. Luke delivers key messages to the public through outreach and design solutions ensuring that society's collective understanding of accessibility in our city continues to advance and grow. Luke has recently been recognized as a "Difference Maker" by the Rick Hansen Foundation for his efforts in this field.

Pride Award:

Keisha Williams

Keisha Williams is an invaluable community member in the City of Toronto. Her work over the past decade to unravel racism, homophobia, transphobia, and incarceration has bridged Black, African, Indigenous, queer, racialized people and sex workers over a wide array of issues. Through her work with the Prisoner's HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), Keisha has actively supported incarcerated and criminalized queer and trans women, provided HIV/AIDS education and sexual health resources, and facilitated harm reduction and support group sessions for some of our most marginalized community members. Her work also informs her consultations, policy and research reviews at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network to promote change at a legislative level. For the past six years, Keisha has been a key organizer for Blockorama, a Pride Toronto stage that showcases Black/Caribbean/African Queer and Trans local and renowned performers.

William P. Hubbard Award:

Ritu Bhasin

Ritu has a breadth of expertise in diversity and inclusion, leadership development, and people strategies, including recruitment, performance management, employee engagement and retention strategies, and change management. Upon completing her MBA, Ritu took a leap of faith, left her prestigious legal management role and founded her own consulting firm Bhasin Consulting Inc. She is a regular contributor in the Toronto media, including her past column, Work It Out, on the leading morning Toronto radio show, CBC's Metro Morning - focusing on workplace issues, leadership and diversity. Ritu has previously taught in the Executive Programs at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, in diversity strategy in not-for-profit governance. Additionally, Ritu was on the instructing team that contributed to The Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance's 2011 DiverseCity Fellows Program. Ritu contributes to many of Toronto's community organizations including CivicAction and the Maytree Foundation, and is mentor to dozens of emerging leaders from racialized communities, including youths from Toronto's Regent Park community.

Constance E. Hamilton Award

The Women Members of Council will report separately on the results of their selection.

Conclusion

The City of Toronto's Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards program gives recognition to the efforts being made to create an inclusive, barrier free city where human rights are respected and diversity is recognized and celebrated as a strength.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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